Dementia Care: Decision Tree & Guide
The Dementia Care Decision Tree
To Help Caretakers of Loved Ones with Dementia

Start Here

Does he/she forget any of the following:
- What he/she is doing midway through a task?
- To take medications?
- To keep up with personal hygiene?
- To turn appliances off after use?
- If it is morning, night or midday?

NO

Can he/she safely perform daily activities including:
- Moving around his/her environment?
- Getting dressed?
- Bathing or showering?

YES

Has his/her judgment been affected? Has he/she ever:
- Taken a ride from a stranger?
- Dressed inappropriately for the weather?
- Invited strangers into the home?
- Been careless with sharp objects?

YES

Is he/she unsafe in his/her home? Does he/she:
- Have a recent history of falling?
- Forget to turn off burners after cooking?
- Often burn food?
- Place metal items in the microwave?
- Forget to lock doors?

NO

See page 5 for costs associated with care.

NO

Does a family member or friend willing, physically able and emotionally available to assist him/her with all daily needs?

YES

or

Does he/she have the monetary resources available to pay for assistance in or out of his/her home?

NO

Check with his/her insurance provider to see what assistance is available.

See pg. 9 for more information

YES

Does he/she exhibit behaviors that would likely cause harm to self or others?

NO

Does he/she require daily skilled nursing services?

NO

YES

NO

Assisted living or home with 24hr supervision and assistance

Nursing Home

YES

Home independently

YES

NO

Home with family care, community-based care or adult day care
The Dementia Care Decision Guide

Occupational Therapy in Dementia Care

What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a healthcare specialty that works with people of all ages, diagnoses, and abilities with one goal in mind: to help people remain as independent as possible in the activities they want or need to do to live a happy and meaningful life.

How can Occupational Therapists Help People With Dementia?

OTs use their knowledge and experience of working with older adults to help people with dementia. OTs view dementia as a condition affecting a person’s daily activities. OTs can train family members, formal caregivers, or people in the early stages of the disease in what to expect with dementia and how to adapt environments and activities to the needs of the person. OTs can help people with dementia live as independently as possible for as long as possible and can train family members in how to assist and support them. An OT can evaluate the person’s function, home environment, and family supports to determine strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions for needed changes.

Kindly visit [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/dementias](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/dementias) to take a survey before reading the information in this packet.
Purpose of the Dementia Care Decision Tree

The Dementia Care Decision Tree can be used to help caregivers make educated decisions about the care needs of their loved ones with dementia. The Dementia Care: Decision Tree and Guide is a research-based tool designed to lead caregivers to a decision for safe housing for someone with dementia. The decision tree can simplify the difficult decision process and help caregivers think about their loved one's function, health problems, and available resources.

The Importance of Daily Tasks When Making Decisions About Care

Forgetfulness and memory loss are a part of normal aging, but for people with dementia, changes in behavior and function can happen quickly, leading to the inability to perform even basic daily tasks and self-care.

Activities of daily living refer to basic self-care tasks such as feeding, bathing, dressing, and using the toilet. More complex tasks needed to live independently include managing money, cooking a meal, cleaning the house, and taking medicines correctly.

For people with dementia, quality of life can be affected by the ability to do daily tasks. A study of people with dementia found that as people needed more help with activities of daily living, their quality of life decreased.
Care Options for People With Dementia

**Nursing Home**

What is a nursing home?
Nursing Homes are described as the highest level of care that one can receive outside of a hospital. Most people with advanced dementia reside in these facilities.

What do most nursing homes offer?
- Advanced medical care
- Patient supervision by doctors
- Skilled nursing on site
- Therapy services
- Help with bathing, dressing, feeding, and other activities of daily living

Average cost of care:
- Semi Private Room: $77,380 yearly
- Private Room: $87,600 yearly

**Assisted Living**

What are assisted living facilities?
Assisted living facilities provide a housing option for seniors who do not require medical care, but may need help with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, and feeding.

What do most assisted living facilities offer?
- Minimal health supervision
- Assistance with medication
- Help with bathing, dressing, feeding, and daily tasks
- Housekeeping, transportation, security
- Leisure activities
- Live with spouse

Average cost of care:
- Private Room: $42,000 yearly

**Adult Day Programs**

What is an adult day center?
Adult day centers provide a daily break for caregivers or allow caregivers who work to stay employed during the day. Centers can also provide people with dementia time to participate in meaningful activities, outings, and socialize with others.

What do most adult day centers offer?
- Counseling and personal care
- Nutrition and leisure activities
- Minimal health and medical services

Average cost of care:
- $16,900 yearly
- $65 daily

**Community-Based Care**

What are home health aides?
A home health aide is a person who can give hands-on help with feeding, dressing, bathing, meal prep, medication management and other daily tasks. Aids are under the supervision of a registered nurse.

Average cost of care: $20 hourly

What is a home helper, home sitter?
Sitters are people who help complete household tasks that cannot be managed alone. They can provide care such as cooking, cleaning or running errands.

Average cost of care: $19 hourly
Caregiver Challenges

Being a caregiver is challenging. The increased demands of caring for a loved one can lead the caregiver to experience anxiety, stress, burnout, or depression. Taking care of yourself is important—not only for you but for your loved one. In fact, the leading predictor of placement into assisted living or a nursing home is depression of the caregiver. The health of loved ones with dementia is strongly related to the well-being of their caregiver.

Below are helpful local and national resources to help you as you care for your loved one with dementia. These resources offer tips, advice, and support for caregivers.

Helpful Resources for Caregivers

**Poydras House Caregiver Support Group**
New Orleans, Louisiana
504-897-0535
Meets regularly to discuss issues related to caregiving for people with dementia.

**Alzheimer’s Association Caregiver Center**
http://www.alz.org/care/
Provides information on daily care, stages of Alzheimer’s and dementia, behaviors, and care options.

**New Orleans Chapter**
For support group information: 504-330-2426

**Caregiver.org Online Support Center**
www.caregiver.org
Contains information about caregiving for loved ones, including caregiver education, online support for caregivers, and advocacy.

**Compare Nursing Homes Online**
http://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare
Search results display nursing home
Help Your Loved One Stay Home Longer: Prevent Falls

Safety in the home is directly related and measured by falls:\textsuperscript{11}

- Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injury.
- Each year, one-third of Americans aged 65 or older have a fall.
- Every 15 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall.
- More than half of all falls happen inside the home.
- Falls with or without injury impact quality of life.
- Fear of falling may cause people to limit activities and social participation. This can result in further physical decline, depression, social isolation, and feelings of helplessness.

What can you do to prevent falls in the home?\textsuperscript{12}

- Remove things that can cause falls from hallways, stairs, and frequently walked areas.
- Install handrails inside and next to the bathtub or shower and next to the toilet.
- Improve lighting in the home. As we age, we need brighter lights to see well. Install lights on all staircases.
- Remove small rugs or use a non-slip rug pad to keep rugs from slipping.
- Keep frequently used items in cabinets that can be easily reached without using a step stool.
- Install ramps to eliminate falls on exterior stairs.\textsuperscript{13}
- Ask your doctor to recommend an occupational therapist in your area to help you complete a home safety assessment.

For more information, review the Rebuilding Together’s Safe at Home Checklist

www.rebuildingtogether.org/resource/age-in-place-checklist

Rebuilding Together provides home modification services to low-income homeowners throughout the United States\textsuperscript{14}

New Orleans, 504-581-7032
How to Find Community-Based Care

1) Elder Care Government:  
www.eldercarelocator.gov
  • Offers information to help families find quality care.
  • Explains home health care options and payment options.

2) Home Instead: www.homeinstead.com
  • Provides non-medical caregivers in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish
  • Can provide caregivers trained in dementia care.
  • Call: 504-455-4911

3) Visiting Angels:
  • Provides in-home, elder, respite, senior personal, and companion care services.
  • 1929 Hickory Ave., New Orleans, 70123
  • Call: 504-737-0522

4) A First Name Basis:  
www.afirstnamebasis.com
  • Non-medical caregiving company in Louisiana
  • Call: 877-557-5525

5) Dependable Care:  
www.dependablecare.net
  • Provides non-medical care in the New Orleans Area and St. Tammany parish
  • 702 N Carrollton Ave, New Orleans, LA
  • Call: 504-486-5044

6) Egan Healthcare Services:  
www.eganhealthcare.com
  • Provides skilled nursing services in the home throughout New Orleans and surrounding areas.
  • Call: 504-835-4474
Medicare and Medicaid

Medicare Part A: Hospital insurance
Typically pays for:
- Hospital care
- 100 days of skilled nursing facility care or nursing home care
- End-of-life hospice care
- Limited home health services

Medicare Part B: Medical insurance
Typically pays for:
- Medically necessary services
- Supplies
- Preventative services

Medicare Qualifications:
- Medicare is for people age 65 and older as well as those who have a special condition or disability.
- Medicare Hospital Insurance (Part A) and Medicare Supplementary Medical Insurance (Part B) is available to three basic groups: individuals who are aged, disabled, or those with end-stage renal disease.

Medicaid:
- This is the only public program that covers long-term nursing home care for people who meet the requirements of a low income and minimal assets.
- Most people living in nursing homes who qualify for Medicaid are required to spend their Social Security income and any other monthly income, except for a minimal personal needs allowance, to pay for nursing home care. Please consult with an attorney or financial advisor for more information.
- Medicaid will make up the difference if the resident cannot pay the full amount or if the resident has a financially dependent spouse.
- Because of the high costs of long term care services, people with dementia often deplete their income and assets and will eventually qualify for Medicaid.

Medicaid Qualifications:
- In Louisiana, one must be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident of Louisiana, or a legal alien.
- One must be in need of health care or insurance assistance and is low income or very low income.
- One must also be either pregnant, blind, have a disability or a family member in your household with a disability, be responsible for children under 19 years of age, or be over 65 years old.
- Those who are entitled to Medicare Part A and/or Part B are also eligible.

Kindly visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/dementias to take our survey again after you have finished reviewing this document.
Thank you for participating in our survey.
References:


Resources for The Dementia Care Decision Tree (19-21)


This information is only a guide: no one understands your medical condition like yourself and the healthcare professionals who care for you. If you have concerns about yourself or a loved one, we urge you to schedule an appointment with your personal doctor, or bring it up during your next visit. Your physician should be included in significant decisions that will impact the quality of life of your loved one with dementia. Specialist doctors that your primary care physician may refer you to include neurologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and optometrists.1